

Serial No. 09/889,834
Reply to Office Action of March 3, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) Apparatus for packaging elongate members, the apparatus comprising: a frame comprising a base and side members; at least one packing member engageable with the frame, the packing member having a deformable portion for engaging elongate members to be handled; and means for retaining the packing member in contact with the elongate members, wherein the at least one packing member comprises a rigid cross-bar and, said deformable portion is in the form of an elastomeric jacket surrounding said cross-bar.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the packing member comprises a cross-bar for extending between the frame side members.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein at least two packing members are provided.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein, in use, one of said packing members overlies and underlies each elongate member.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the deformable portion of the packing member is resilient.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the frame is generally U-shaped.

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7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a second frame is provided, each frame being adapted for location towards a respective end of the elongate members.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the frames are joined by at least one rigid connector member.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein two connector members are provided and with the base members of the frames create a generally rectangular base frame.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said rigid connector member between said frames has forklift protector plates to facilitate handling of the apparatus.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the packing member is adapted to be positioned at different heights within the frame.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the packing member is restrained against movement parallel and perpendicular to the length of the elongate members when engaged by the packing member.

13. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the packing member has ends adapted to engage profiles on the side members.

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14. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for packaging elongate members, the apparatus comprising: a frame comprising a base and side members; at least one packing member engageable with the frame, the packing member having a deformable portion for engaging elongate members to be handled; and means for retaining the packing member in contact with the elongate members, wherein the packing member is restrained against movement parallel and perpendicular to the length of the elongate members when engaged, wherein the packing member has ends which engage profiles on the side members, and wherein the packing member ~~has ends which~~ define rigid heads for location in channels defined by the side members.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the heads are slidable in the channels.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the retaining means is adapted to pull an upper packing member towards the base.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the retaining means comprises a mechanical tightening arrangement.

18. (Previously Presented) Apparatus for packaging elongate members, the apparatus comprising: a frame comprising a base and side members; at least one packing member engageable with the frame, the packing member having a deformable portion for engaging elongate members to be handled; and means for retaining the packing member in contact with

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the elongate members, wherein the retaining means comprises flexible members adapted to be draped over an uppermost packing member.

Claims 19-22 (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the elastomeric jacket defines vertical profiles on either side of the rigid cross-bar shaped to facilitate elastomer displacement with increasing vertical compression.

24. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for packaging elongate members, the apparatus comprising: a frame comprising a base and side members; at least one packing member engageable with the frame, the packing member having a deformable portion for engaging elongate members to be handled; and means for retaining the packing member in contact with the elongate members, wherein the packing member comprises a rigid section, said deformable portion comprises one or more elastomeric jackets fixed to the rigid section, ~~the~~ each elastomeric ~~jackets~~ jacket defining vertical profiles on either side of the rigid section shaped to facilitate elastomer displacement with increasing vertical compression, and wherein the elastomeric jacket defines displaceable lobes, upper and lower lobes of said lobes being on each side of the jacket and being relatively vertically moveable.

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the elastomeric jacket defines side lobes and a central section, with one or more channels between the central section and the side lobes.

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26. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for packaging elongate members, the apparatus comprising: a frame comprising a base and side members; at least one packing member engageable with the frame, the packing member having a deformable portion for engaging elongate members to be handled; and means for retaining the packing member in contact with the elongate members, wherein the packing member comprises a rigid section, said deformable portion comprises one or more elastomeric jackets fixed to the rigid section, and wherein the each elastomeric jacket defines angular edges that are adapted to exert increasing resistance to elongate member lateral motion with respect to the packing member with increasing compression of the said each elastomeric jacket by contact with the one of said elongate member members.

Claims 27-29 (Cancelled)